

Mayor's Council on Disability
Chattanooga, Tennessee
Meeting Minutes
September 14, 2009

Chairperson, John Jackson, Creative Initiative
Vice Chair, Bryon Kluesner, UTC OSD Office
Secretary, Carol Martin, UTK Office of Disability & Employment
Parliamentarian, Jill Hindman, Dev Disability Council, Region 3

Council Members

Sandra Booher, Moccasin Bend Hospital
Jim Queen, CARTA Care-A-Van
Tommy Gates, Siskin Hospital for Physical Rehabilitation
Carolyn Boyd, Signal Centers
Phillip Stevens, City of Chattanooga
Karl Epperson
Nichol Myers, AIM Center
Robert White, Epilepsy Foundation
Katie Jones, Merrill Lynch (Special Needs)

Mayor's Office Participants

Matt Lea, Assistant to Mayor
Jay Piercy, OMA City Compliance Officer
Kathie Fulgham, Mayor's Office

Absent members:

Sandra Booher
Nichol Myers
Phillip Stevens
Jay Piercy
Tommy Gates

Visitors:

Lana Newton
Bea Lyons
Danielle Hooper
Chris Jackson
Elaine Adams
Sidney McDonald
Danielle Hooper

John welcomed the group and asked the Council to introduce themselves. He then asked the group if they had any changes or corrections to the August minutes. Carol Martin said that Bryon Kluesner sent several name spelling corrections for the group that attended the last meeting from UTC OSD Goodwill trip. These corrections have already been made. The Council approved the minutes as corrected.

Bryon Kluesner discussed the problem of no bus stop at the new UTC Student Health Center. But, as of today, the problem has been solved. The shelter was painted, had a Moc's Express Bus Stop Sign installed and the bus drivers are now stopping there.

Elaine Adams said that she was approached by two employees of Preferred Alternatives, Inc. who wanted to create some meaningful day service programs for their clients with disabilities. They have been meeting for four months and have come up with some goals and objectives and have created a mission statement. They now have 12 agencies that meet, a good community group. Elaine said they are shooting for one large quarterly event. This will allow people supported by one agency to interact with people who are supported by other agencies. They are also working on creating clubs – a job club, a get fit club and a community explorers club. Elaine said they want to expand this for those that are not supported by any specific agency. If anyone is interested in learning more, let Elaine know and she will add you to the e-mail distribution

Jill Hindman added that Elaine's project has been discussed in Region 3 DD Council East Management Committee. Tina Rachael from TN DIDS, was very impressed that Chattanooga area agencies were working so well together on this project and took it to the Nashville Management Committee. They are very excited about this.

Virginia Piper said that she has spent the last five years as a volunteer mentoring parents who have children with disabilities in the school system, helping them to understand the special education law and what their children's rights are under the law. Virginia has now hooked up with Lisa Mathias who started the organization, Life Line,

A faith based organization. Life Line received a grant from the US Dept of Education for \$300,000 for a community parent resource center. Life Line received the funding to administer this grant which is called CARE (Chattanooga Area Resource and Education) which is not faith-based and serves Hamilton, Sequatchie, Marion, Dade, Walker and Catoosa Counties. The address of the new Community Parent Resource Center is 1609 McCallie Avenue.

The National Disability Conference decided against coming to Chattanooga and has chosen Nashville instead. Matt Lea said everyone worked hard to get them here, but there was a timing issue and it seems that somebody in the national council had a very close contact in Nashville. The event is October 26th and October 27th. The group decided against the Opryland Hotel. There was discussion about the Opryland Hotel not being disability friendly and having no free parking which would discourage the local community from coming out. Visitor, Sidney McDonald asked if the Conference was free. The public comment portion is free, but rooms for overnight guests must be paid for. However, from Chattanooga, this can be a day trip with the only cost being transportation. There is a time during the conference that the public is invited to make comments regarding issues. One hot issue is the restraints and seclusion used on school age kids because Tennessee does not have a law against this. The Conference will also be looking at best practices surrounding healthcare and the different services that people with disabilities need to receive. Individuals who wish to speak in the public comment portion are usually given about three minutes. It is good to hear what others have to say and a good way to network. Visitors cannot attend the conference itself, just the public comment portion.

Kathie Fulgham announced that plans for Go!Fest were going well, but she made a plea for volunteers. She said the posters were completed and some of the ads are out in the quarterly and monthly publications. The billboards have been designed and are going up. TV spots will be ready on Wednesday. Matt Lea added that he is getting the final line up for the main stage. He has The Pool, as well

as Amanda Stevens who was at WhoFest. We also have Orange Grove Chorus, Orange Grove Dancers and a third Orange Grove group. Matt said the Life Force helicopter will land at the zoo during the festival which the kids can come up and see, look inside. Matt also added that Kathie has worked really hard on this event behind the scenes.

Matt said that the Mayor has sent letters to both restaurant proprietors regarding a wheelchair lift that is not functioning that is located between the two businesses. This matter came to the Mayor's attention as a result of a letter sent to the MCD.

Carol Martin announced that the Planning Committee for the Disability in the Workplace/Awards Program co-sponsored by the SE TN Placement Consortium and the MCD has had its first meeting. (The next meeting will be Thursday, October 8th at 3:00 at the DRC.) One of the things we will have is a panel of people with disabilities that are working. At this stage, we would like to gather a list of names and determine who would be the best speakers. We also need this panel to cover a variety of disabilities – mental illness, intellectual disability, mobility disability, hard of hearing or deaf, visual disability, etc. We cannot select everyone that is nominated. We will also have an employer roundtable. If anyone knows of an employer who is especially good about hiring people with disabilities, please let Carol know.

Sidney McDonald, a visitor who is employed at Carmike Theaters, said that he would like to recommend the manager there, Todd Copeland, for the employer panel at the seminar. His number is 870-9908. Ryan's in Hixson was also mentioned as a good employer of people with disabilities.

Jill Hindman attended a health care hearing at the county commission meeting room. She said she felt that issues relating to people with disabilities were not discussed, such as transportation to the doctor, accessible work out facilities, accessible medical equipment, etc.

Jill also said that the Region 3 Council Meeting for the DD Council has not been scheduled, but as soon as it is she will pass the information along to the MCD.

Jim Queen said that CARTA Care-A-Van expenses this year were \$934,348. It brought in a total revenue of \$120,625 so it is obvious this is a not for profit business. Care-A-Van served 43,561 clients, up from 42,699 last year. Total request for trips were 53,485 due to the many cancellations each month – usually over 1,000. Turn downs are 172, down from 556 last year. Mileage was 453,516 miles. Total cost per trip is \$21.44 for which the client is charged \$2.50, the remaining subsidized by state, local federal or grant funding. The cost per mile to operate the vehicles is \$2.06. The average mileage per trip was 10.41. A measure that the industry uses is passenger per hour. For Care-A-Van, it is 1.38 which seems low but is pretty good considering that Care-A-Van covers the entire city not just the required three-quarter corridor. This information is produced annually. This information is based on figures for the year ending June 30, 2009.

John Jackson said that he recently started as the President of the Photographic Society which will host an open house on October 15th. Ron Lowery, an aerial photographer and industrial photographer, will be speaker. He will get a flyer out on this. Everyone is invited.

Elaine reported on the therapeutic recreational activities that she has scheduled. Soccer started Saturday and 27 individuals came out for that. Tonight is biking if it doesn't rain. Elaine said she will be sure to e-mail her scheduled activities to the MCD because she is planning a very busy schedule this fall.

Lana Newton, visitor from TN Deaf-Blind Services, announced that Terri Rice, a regular visitor to MCD, started her new job as a Rehab Teacher for Blind Services. Terri has also been selected for an eight state award as outstanding deaf-blind citizen of the year. Lana will be presenting in Biloxi, Mississippi at the conference where this award will be presented. Lana along with a representative from the Helen Keller Center will give a presentation about the Confident

Living Program that they organized this year in Chattanooga. Signal Centers is putting together a DVD of this week-long program. Terri, Carolyn Boyd and Lana have also signed up to go abroad next year with the UTC OSD. That program is branching out into the community. Lana also mentioned that she and Terri participated in a deaf-blind sailing day. The Nashville Yacht Club volunteered five boats and crew and took them out. There were 7 people from Chattanooga and quite a few from Nashville.

Danielle Hooper, Chattanooga Brain Injury Association, said that she wanted to thank Care-A-Van for transporting 75 brain injury survivors during a picnic at the TN River Park. The meeting place that had been planned was filled with people at a cross country track even so all of the participants needed to be moved to another spot down the river. Thanks to Care-A-Van, this was accomplished. She also told the group about Project Brain, an organization that is funded by the state to provide educational support to children who have suffered brain injuries. The organization tries to identify those children in the school system so they can receive the services that they need. Project Brain will come to any school and do training and work with children to get them these services. Many times this disability gets lumped in with Developmental Disabilities.

Carol Martin asked if anyone was familiar with STAND. Terri Rice asked her to bring up the possibility of having a STAND Representative attend an MCD meeting or have someone from MCD attend a STAND meeting. Kathie Fulgham said the organization was taking a community survey to determine what direction the community wants to see Chattanooga move. This is similar to the old Vision 2000 and Chattanooga Venture. Kathie will ask a member to attend a future MCD meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for October 5th at 3:00 p.m. at the DRC.

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Carol Martin, Secretary
Mayor's Council on Disability